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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XLVII—No. 8 **June, 1959**

IF coming events are said to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them. It is, then, by those shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy, that we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them. There must be truth and fact in that which every people of antiquity accepted and made the foundation of its religions and its faith.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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A U M

If basic ideas are not taken in, nothing can be done.
—ROBERT CROSBIE

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XLVII June, 1959 No. 8

WHAT ARE THE "SOCIAL ISSUES"?

IN the days of H. P. Blavatsky's editorship of *Lucifer,* the pages of that magazine contained widely diverse material. There were articles by socialists, discussions of religion by Christians, and contributions by materialists and agnostics. Often, H.P.B. would add footnotes providing the Theosophical perspective on what was said. These incisive comments are sometimes the clearest insights in the Theosophical literature concerning some seldom-mentioned subject.

There were never any really "political" articles in *Lucifer,* for the reasons so well explained in the *Key to Theosophy,* but on what might be termed the subject of "social" questions, H.P.B. herself wrote a classic of analysis from the Theosophical point of view, entitled, "Let Every Man Prove His Own Work." This discussion, put together with various isolated statements in other articles, and certain of the articles by William Q. Judge, constitutes a thoughtful treatise on the basic questions of what is now termed "social philosophy."

The fundamental difference between Theosophical thinking and other approaches to these questions lies in the Theosophical conception of Man and in the teaching concerning the processes and ends of human evolution. But the bearing of these considerations may perhaps be best illustrated by giving attention to a question proposed by a reader of Theosophy, which is as follows:

> Just how well do liberal social theories check out? What is the weakness of the *status quo?* When we are presented with the proposals of modern apostles, what tests can we use to judge for ourselves? It seems to me that it should be possible to develop a sound basis for con-

> sidering every manner of problem raised by our complex system of life, using the same laws which we observe working in our physical sciences, as recorded by history. There should be a common denominator which will permit us to simplify the most complicated problems and then readily test for ourselves the degree to which the many courses of action open to us meet the test of truth.

Before settling down to a full engagement with this statement, we should take a preliminary look at the hope of a certainty in judgment of social theories which equals the exactitude possible in the physical sciences. Can this hope be justified?

The subject-matter of the physical sciences is the behavior of matter. The foundation of our knowledge of law in the physical sciences is *predictability.* The scientist has a law when he is able to say, given a known set of conditions and a cause of definable nature, precisely what the result will be.

But when we are dealing with human beings, as is the case in the social sciences—and in any social theory which pretends to be "scientific"—is a similar certainty possible?

Some social scientists have believed that it *ought* to be possible. In general, the sort of theories which have given the most promise of such certainty are *statistical* theories. There is a parallel, here, between physics and social science. Physicists have ground for arguing that the laws they deal with and use are really reports in statistical averages of the behavior of matter. The motion of subatomic particles is basically unpredictable, according to the Heisenberg principle of indeterminacy. You have to have a large mass of atoms in order to make statements about their behavior. So also with human beings. When judgments about the behavior of human beings are offered, the social scientist will ask, "How large a sample is this judgment based upon? Is it statistically significant?"

The Theosophist might urge further questions. What are the ethical views of the people in question? In the *Key to Theosophy,* Madame Blavatsky speaks of the low rate of crime in Buddhist countries, attributing it to the religious philosophy which is traditional in those lands. On this subject, especially in relation to Buddhist culture, Fielding Hall's *The Soul of a People* is a text useful to consult. Hall shows what an enormous difference there is between attitudes derived from belief in Karma and Reincarnation and those which spring from a traditional

Christian background. Another book to refer to is Marco Pallis' *Peaks and Lamas,* for insight into the effect on the behavior of people of religious conceptions different from our own. Then, in addition to such modifications, there is the incommensurable factor of the egos who are involved. Little more than speculative judgments can be offered concerning their past, character, and tendency, and no one but an adept could attempt to separate and evaluate the influences coming from the distant karmic past and those which originate in the prevailing culture, the religion and custom, of the present.

These considerations are all in terms of groups or masses of human beings, so that their varying influence would be a part of any conclusions drawn from statistical study of behavior. Judgments, that is, concerning the population of the Eastern United States, might have little validity for the population of Tibet or Ceylon, while studies of people pervaded with the outlook of Islamic culture could easily produce views which would be largely contradicted by findings in modern Germany. Again, there would be the unknown X factor to contend with—the matter of the egos and their innate differences.

What sort of accuracy, then, is possible in judgments of human behavior? *Some* measure of exactitude must be within reach, since there are specialists in the social sciences who draw conclusions of one sort or another, and all theories of law and government are founded upon assumptions concerning behavior. But such conclusions relate almost entirely to the typical responses of the lower nature to mass "conditionings."

The problem of law or government is the problem of balance between the principle of freedom and the principle of order. The questions involved, here, are extremely complicated, since so many factors of indeterminate influence play a part, but two great types of society may be distinguished in historical practice. There is the hierarchical form of society, in which some men are set above others in authority by reason of their status, the latter being determined in numerous ways. For example, the *Gita* speaks of the Adept-Kings, and other sources suggest a time in the distant past when men were ruled by the beneficent authority of wise initiates who had the knowledge enabling them to suit the government to the needs of the people. The classical form of this social order is that described by the Laws of Manu, often referred to in the Theosophical teachings. Such societies are sometimes called "organic"

societies, by reason of the idea that their structure is conformable to the laws of nature. They are believed to reflect in human institutions the transcendental order of being.

But we have only to speak of these societies to be reminded of all the reasons and justifications for the revolutions of the eighteenth century. In this period, a radically different principle of social organization was established—the principle we loosely term "democracy," which rejects the assumptions of the hierarchical or organic societies and sets up a counter-assumption—the proposition that all men are equal, at least politically, and are endowed with equal rights in the determination of the social order which is to give pattern to their lives. Behind this proposition is the idea of a *rational* order. Men have minds, it suggests, and are able to judge for themselves. Who can know, better than they, what is right and good for them?

So we have two great and opposing principles which operate through practical embodiments of social order.

It may be a fact, and many assert it as a fact, that some men *do* know better than others how to govern and to establish orderly relationships among the great mass of mankind. But it may also be a fact, and many assert it as a fact, that despite this superior knowledge of the few—supposing it to exist—the right to choose for himself, even if wrongly, is the prerogative of every individual. This principle is asserted on the philosophical gounds of Natural Right, and on eduational grounds to the effect that men learn by making mistakes as well as in other ways and that to deprive them of the opportunity to make their own mistakes is a grave and perhaps irreparable wrong.

How, then, is the dilemma to be resolved? The obvious resolution lies, in principle, with men who are both disciplined and free. The ideal community is the community in which the only law is common assent—in which no man's sense of freedom infringes upon the freedom of others.

Societies, however, seldom approach this essentially anarchist ideal. Men who make laws, therefore, try to balance one principle against the other in a workable fashion. The modern republic, in its various forms, is a fairly successful attempt at this balance. The ideal of freedom is preserved by the universal franchise, while the ideal of delegating authority to the best and most competent men is achievd by representative democracy. This, at any rate, is the theory, whatever the short-

comings in practice, and it is extremely doubtful that anyone has a better theory to put to work.

What may be the significance of the emergence of the democratic idea, as contrasted with the hierarchical order, from the Theosophical point of view? Fundamentally, it is a change in the principle of authority, and the Theosophical explanation of the change is in the teaching of the progressive incarnation of *Manas*. The more complete the incarnation of the mind-principle, the greater the capacity for individual decision, and therefore of responsibility, in each man. In the broad perspective of cyclic evolution, this is a "mass" phenomenon; that is, it affects all men, more or less, who are in incarnation at the time. Great social changes, therefore, would be expected to accompany a further incarnation of manas, and great social changes have occurred. There have also been disturbances, chaotic break-downs, as well as thrilling achievements, in connection with the change.

It follows that the most wisely appointed social system in one epoch of human history may prove an abortive failure in another age. And it also follows from the Theosophical view of these questions that political theorists and social reformers who are unable to take into account the conception of human development presented by reincarnation, cyclic evolution, and Karma, may easily project programs which hold little but disaster. The revolutions of the twentieth century have been diverse in character, but some of them clearly illustrate the catastrophes which may result from a reforming passion joined with ignorance of the nature and possibilities of men. For purposes of discussion, we could say that the Fascist and Nazi revolutions represented an atavistic return to hierarchical social ideas, but in perverse form, with the doctrine of duty and public obligation darkened by arrogance, brutality, and extreme nationalism. These trends amounted to a defiance of the inner spirit of the age, which is toward a more universal conception of man. The Communist revolution was a violent reaction to economic injustice, the facts of which are beyond dispute. Here, again, however, the method was coercive and hierarchical, in that it became a movement of absolute political authority—and philosophical authority as well—of those who rose to power, and the ethical idea of the solidarity of mankind, so often voiced in socialist and communist propaganda, was superseded by the expedient interests of the communist national state.

The other revolutions of this century, most of them since the second

World War, except for the Chinese revolution, have been more like the European and American revolutions of the eighteenth century, in which the idea of individual rights and responsibilities is integrated with social objectives.

In general, then, except for countries under some form of totalitarian rule, the socio-political problem of the present is to find a just and orderly balance in the twentieth century for the working of principles which were widely declared and put into practice for the first time in the eighteenth century.

Our correspondent asks specifically: "Just how well do liberal social theories check out? What is the weakness of the *status quo*? When we are presented with the proposals of modern apostles, what tests can we use to judge for ourselves?"

Well, what is "liberal theory"? Historically, liberal theory developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It began as an effort to remove from the legal structure of modern states the built-in privileges allowed to the hereditary nobility. All this is clearly recounted in Herbert Spencer's *Man and the State.* The idea was to give all men an equal position before the law, and an equal start in what the American Declaration of Independence calls "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

In time, however, it became apparent that the advantages which were once provided by law to men born into certain families were now being transferred to men of wealth. The possession of wealth constituted practical power over the welfare and lives of other men. Accordingly, the liberal movement, being devoted to human welfare, now set out to control the actions of men with economic advantages, and in behalf of the great majority who were without either wealth or power to compensate for these advantages by controlling and limiting them. The government became the agency of control. In a word, from being a movement devoted to removing inequitable laws, it became a movement which sought to assure equitable conditions. This was a hazardous change in policy, as Spencer pointed out, but the provocations were great, and the intentions were high.

Meanwhile, the spread of Marxist thought affected the political and economic thinking of all intelligent people, so that, in time, "liberal" came to mean a kind of intermediate step between *laissez faire* capitalism and socialism, or, at a further extreme, communism. It seems fair

to say that the liberal thought of the twentieth century, carried to its logical conclusion, has envisioned some form of what we now call the "Welfare State." Liberal thought is to be distinguished from Communism by its devotion to civil liberties and to its lack of dogma on the question of whether the instruments of production should be privately or publicly owned. Probably, most liberals would endorse some kind of a pluralistic economy, under which economic functions would be carried on in the manner deemed most expedient for the public good.

The foregoing, however, is analysis in a vacuum which ignores the impact of modern war. War and preparation for war have twisted all the classical forms of social theory almost entirely out of shape. The modern state is not the socialist state or the capitalist state or the liberal social welfare state, but the Garrison State. The domination of military requirements in the economic life of the people, and military fears and expectations in the political life of the people, has meant the slow decline of the democratic idea and the resumption of the hierarchical idea in its most oppressive form—the military hierarchy. There could be no more stringent test of the capacity of the manasic principle than to work out the means to freedom of decision under conditions of this sort. How this challenge will be met remains to be seen.

As for the specific questions of our correspondent, the judgment of all social theories will, for the Theosophical student, be a matter of their bearing on the conditions of human development from an egoic point of view. The fundamental issue, for the Theosophist, is soul-education. It must be added, however, that soul-education includes the whole gamut of experience in human life. The man born into circumstances which tend to guide him into a career in, say, one of the professions, has his own lessons to learn from that experience. There is a wide variety of functions in life through which men meet the experiences they have a need to meet. Social theories and social systems are a part of the background and a part of the mechanisms of this course. Karma, obviously, enters into these relationships, so that a man born into a social community constructed on oppressively hierarchical lines is invited to comprehend the meaning of this situation and his relation to it, as well as challenged to make a contribution toward changing it.

Versatility in the capacity to turn any and every situation to an educational purpose is what is called for. The system which allows and encourages this versatility, then, is the best.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S well-known lines:

> Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
> Yes, to the very end.
> Does the journey take the whole long day?
> From morn to night, my friend.

are like an epitome of the life of those who are truly treading the path which leads to higher things. Whatever differences are to be found in the various presentations of the Esoteric Doctrine, as in every age it donned a fresh garment, different both in hue and texture to that which preceded; yet in every one of them we find the fullest agreement upon one point—the road to spiritual development. One only inflexible rule has been ever binding upon the neophyte as it is binding now—the *complete* subjugation of the lower nature by the higher. From the Vedas and Upanishads to the recently published "Light on the Path," search as we may through the bibles of every race and cult, we find but one way, —hard, painful, troublesome, by which men can gain the true spiritual insight. And how can it be otherwise, since all religions and all philosophies are but the variants of the first teachings of the One Wisdom, imparted to men at the beginning of the cycle by the Planetary Spirit?

The true Adept, the developed man, must, we are always told, *become* —he cannot be made. The process is therefore one of growth through evolution, and this must necessarily involve a certain amount of pain.

The main cause of pain lies in our perpetually seeking the permanent in the impermanent; not only seeking, but acting as if we had already found the unchangeable in a world of which the one certain quality we can predicate is constant change; and always, just as we fancy we have taken a firm hold upon the permanent, it changes within our very grasp, and pain results.

Again, the idea of growth involves also the idea of disruption: the inner being must continually burst through its confining shell or encasement, and such a disruption must also be accompanied by pain, not physical but mental and intellectual.

And this is how it is, in the course of our lives. The trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen—it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly

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NOTE.—This article was first published by H. P. Blavatsky in the *Theosophist*, May, 1885, and was last reprinted in THEOSOPHY, January, 1946.

bear. If we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point; that our growth, to be real growth, and not the collective result of a series of excrescences, must progress evenly throughout, just as the body of a child grows, not first the head and then a hand, followed perhaps by a leg, but in all directions at once, regularly and imperceptibly. Man's tendency is to cultivate each part separately, neglecting the others in the meantime—every crushing pain is caused by the expansion of some neglected part, which expansion is rendered more difficult by the effects of the cultivation bestowed elsewhere.

Evil is often the result of over-anxiety, and men are always trying to do too much; they are not content to leave well enough alone, to do always just what the occasion demands and no more; they exaggerate every action and so produce karma to be worked out in a future birth.

One of the subtlest forms of this evil is the hope and desire of reward. Many there are, who, albeit often unconsciously, are yet spoiling all their efforts by entertaining this idea of reward, and allowing it to become an active factor in their lives, and so leaving the door open to anxiety, doubt, fear, despondency—failure.

The goal of the aspirant for spiritual wisdom is entrance upon a higher plane of existence; he is to become a new man, more perfect in every way than he is at present. If he succeeds, his capabilities and faculties will receive a corresponding increase of range and power, just as in the visible world we find that each stage in the evolutionary scale is marked by increase of capacity. This is how it is that the Adept becomes endowed with marvellous powers that have been so often described, but the main point to be remembered is that these powers are the natural accompaniments of existence on a higher plane of evolution, just as the ordinary human faculties are the natural accompaniments of existence on the ordinary human plane.

Many persons seem to think that adeptship is not so much the result of radical development as of additional construction; they seem to imagine that an Adept is a man, who, by going through a certain plainly defined course of training, consisting of minute attention to a set of arbitrary rules, acquires first one power and then another; and, when he has attained a certain number of these powers, is forthwith dubbed an adept. Acting on this mistaken idea, they fancy that the first thing to be done towards attaining adeptship is to acquire "powers"—clair-

voyance and the power of leaving the physical body and travelling to a distance are among those which fascinate the most.

To those who wish to acquire such powers for their own private advantage, we have nothing to say; they fall under the condemnation of all who act for purely selfish ends. But there are others, who, mistaking effect for cause, honestly think that the acquirement of abnormal powers is the only road to spiritual advancement. These look upon our Society as merely the readiest means to enable them to gain knowledge in this direction, considering it as a sort of occult academy, an institution established to afford facilities for the instruction of would-be miracle-workers. In spite of repeated protests and warnings, there are some minds in whom this notion seems ineradicably fixed, and they are loud in expressions of disappointment when they find that what had been previously told them is perfectly true—that the Society was founded to teach no new and easy paths to the acquisition of "powers," and that its only mission is to re-kindle the torch of truth, so long extinguished for all but the very few, and to keep that truth alive by the formation of a fraternal union of mankind, the only soil in which the good seed can grow. The Theosophical Society does indeed desire to promote the spiritual growth of every individual who comes within its influence, but its methods are those of the ancient Rishis, its tenets those of the oldest Esotericism; it is no dispenser of patent nostrums composed of violent remedies which no honest dealer would dare to use.

In this connection we would warn all our members, and others who are seeking spiritual knowledge, to beware of persons offering to teach them easy methods of acquiring psychic gifts; such gifts (*laukika*) are indeed comparatively easy of acquirement by artificial means, but fade out as soon as the nerve-stimulus exhausts itself. The real seership and adeptship which is accompanied by true psychic development (*lokothra*), once reached, is never lost.

It appears that various societies have sprung into existence since the foundation of the Theosophical Society, profiting by the interest the latter has awakened in matters of psychic research, and endeavouring to gain members by promising them easy acquirement of psychic powers. In India we have long been familiar with the existence of hosts of sham ascetics of all descriptions and we fear that there is fresh danger in this direction, here, as well as in Europe and America. We only hope that none of our members, dazzled by brilliant promises, will allow them-

selves to be taken in by self-deluded dreamers, or, it may be, wilful deceivers.

To show that some real necessity exists for our protests and warnings, we may mention that we have recently seen, enclosed in a letter from Benares, copies of an advertisement put forth by a so-called "Mahatma." He calls for "eight men and women who know English and any of the Indian vernaculars well"; and concludes by saying that "those who want to know particulars of the work and *the amount of pay*" should apply to his address with enclosed postage stamps! Upon the table before us lies a reprint of "The Divine Pymander," published in England last year, and which contains a notice to "*Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by* HINDOO MAHATMAS"; cordially inviting them to send in their names to the Editor, who will see them, "after a short probation," admitted into an Occult Brotherhood who "teach *freely* and WITHOUT RESERVE all they find worthy to receive." Strangely enough, we find in the very volume in question Hermes Trismegistus saying:—

"Herein is the only way which leads to Truth, which, indeed, our ancestors trod, and by which they arrived at the attainment of the Good. This way is beautiful and even; nevertheless, it is difficult for the soul to walk therein so long as she is immured within the prison of the body. . . .

"[The human race is drawn towards evil. Evil is its nature, and pleases it. If men should learn that the world is created, that all is done according to providence and necessity, and that by necessity and destiny all things are governed, they would readily begin to despise all things because they are created; to attribute vice to destiny, and to give the rein to all manner of iniquity.] *Therefore, abstain from the crowd, so that by means of ignorance the vulgar may be kept within bounds, even through fear of the unknown.*"

It is perfectly true that some Theosophists have been (through nobody's fault but their own) greatly disappointed because we have offered them no short cut to Yoga Vidya, and there are others who wish for practical work. And, significantly enough, those who have done least for the Society are loudest in fault-finding. Now, why do not these persons and all our members who are able to do so, take up the serious study of mesmerism? Mesmerism has been called the Key to the Occult Sciences, and it has this advantage that it offers peculiar opportunities for doing good to mankind. If in each of our branches we were able to

establish a homeopathic dispensary with the addition of mesmeric healing, such as has already been done with great success in Bombay, we might contribute towards putting the science of medicine in this country on a sounder basis, and be the means of incalculable benefit to the people at large.

There are others of our branches, besides the one at Bombay, that have done good work in this direction, but there is room for infinitely more to be done than has yet been attempted. And the same is the case in the various other departments of the Society's work. It would be a good thing if the members of each branch would put their heads together and seriously consult as to what tangible steps they can take to further the declared objects of the Society. In too many cases the members of the Theosophical Society content themselves with a somewhat superficial study of its books, without making any real contribution to its active work. If the Society is to be a power for good in this and other lands, it can only bring about this result by the active cooperation of every one of its members, and we would earnestly appeal to each of them to consider carefully what possibilities of work are within his power, and then to *earnestly set about carrying them into effect.* Right thought is a good thing, but thought alone does not count for much unless it is translated into action. There is not a single member in the Society who is not able to do *something* to aid the cause of truth and universal brotherhood; it only depends on his own will, to make that *something* an accomplished fact.

Above all we would reiterate the fact that the Society is no nursery for incipient adepts; teachers cannot be provided to go round and give instruction to various branches on the different subjects which come within the Society's work of investigation; the branches must study for themselves; books are to be had, and the knowledge there put forth must be practically applied by the various members: thus will be developed self reliance and reasoning powers. We urge this strongly; for appeals have reached us that any lecturer sent to branches must be practically versed in experimental psychology and clairvoyance (*i.e.,* looking into magic mirrors and reading the future, etc., etc.). Now we consider that such experiments should originate amongst members themselves to be of any value in the development of the individual, or to enable him to make progress in his "uphill" path, and therefore earnestly recommend our members to *try* for themselves.

CONVERSATIONS ON OCCULTISM

VIII

STUDENT.—What is Occultism?

Sage.—It is that branch of knowledge which shows the universe in the form of an egg. The cell of science is a little copy of the egg of the universe. The laws which govern the whole govern also every part of it. As man is a little copy of the universe—is the microcosm—he is governed by the same laws which rule the greater. Occultism teaches therefore of the secret laws and forces of the universe and man, those forces playing in the outer world and known in part only by the men of the day who admit no invisible real nature behind which is the model of the visible.

Student.—What does Occultism teach in regard to man, broadly speaking?

Sage.—That he is the highest product of evolution, and hence has in him a centre or focus corresponding to each centre of force or power in the universe. He therefore has as many centres or foci for force, power, and knowledge as there are such in the greater world about and within.

Student.—Do you mean to include also the ordinary run of men, or is it the exceptions you refer to?

Sage.—I include every human being, and that will reach from the lowest to the very highest, both those we know and those beyond us who are suspected as being in existence. Although we are accustomed to confine the term "human" to this earth, it is not correct to confine that sort of being to this plane or globe, because other planets have beings the same as ours in essential power and nature and possibility.

Student.—Please explain a little more particularly what you mean by our having centres or foci in us.

Sage.—Electricity is a most powerful force not fully known to modern science, yet used very much. The nervous, physical, and mental systems of man acting together are able to produce the same force exactly, and in a finer as well as subtler way and to as great a degree as the most powerful dynamo, so that the force might be used to kill, to alter,

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NOTE.—These articles by William Q. Judge were first published in the *Path,* October and November, 1894, and was last reprinted in THEOSOPHY, April, 1949.

to move or otherwise change any object or condition. This is the "vril" described by Bulwer Lytton in his *Coming Race.*

Nature exhibits to our eyes the power of drawing into one place with fixed limits any amount of material so as to produce the smallest natural object or the very largest. Out of the air she takes what is already there, and by compressing it into the limits of tree or animal form makes it visible to our material eyes. This is the power of condensing into what may be known as the ideal limits, that is, into the limits of the form which is ideal. Man has this same power, and can, when he knows the laws and the proper centres of force in himself, do precisely what Nature does. He can thus make visible and material what was before ideal and invisible by filling the ideal form with the matter condensed from the air. In his case the only difference from Nature is that he does quickly what she brings about slowly.

Among natural phenomena there is no present illustration of telepathy good for our use. Among the birds and the beasts, however, there is telepathy instinctually performed. But telepathy, as it is now called, is the communicating of thought or idea from mind to mind. This is a natural power, and being well understood may be used by one mind to convey to another, no matter how far away or what be the intervening obstacle, any idea or thought. In natural things we can take for that the vibration of the chord which can cause all other chords of the same length to vibrate similarly. This is a branch of Occultism, a part of which is known to the modern investigator. But it is also one of the most useful and one of the greatest powers we have. To make it of service many things have to combine. While it is used every day in common life in the average way—for men are each moment telepathically communicating with each other—to do it in perfection, that is, against obstacle and distance, is perfection of occult art. Yet it will be known one day even to the common world.

Student.—Is there any object had in view by Nature which man should also hold before him?

Sage.—Nature ever works to turn the inorganic or the lifeless or the non-intelligent and non-conscious into the organic, the intelligent, the conscious; and this should be the aim of man also. In her great movements Nature seems to cause destruction, but that is only for the purpose of construction. The rocks are dissolved into earth, elements combine to bring on change, but there is the ever-onward march of progress

in evolution. Nature is not destructive of either thing or time, she is constructive. Man should be the same. And as a free moral agent he should work to that end, and not to procuring gratification merely nor for waste in any department.

Student.—Is Occultism of truth or of falsehood; is it selfish or unselfish; or is it part one and part the other?

Sage.—Occultism is colorless, and only when used by man for the one side or the other is it good or bad. Bad Occultism, or that which is used for selfish ends, is not false, for it is the same as that which is for good ends. Nature is two-sided, negative and positive, good and bad, light and dark, hot and cold, spirit and matter. The Black magician is as powerful in the matter of phenomena as the White, but in the end all the trend of Nature will go to destroy the black and save the white. But what you should understand is that the false man and the true can both be occultists. The words of the Christian teacher Jesus will give the rule for Judgment: "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Occultism is the general, all-inclusive term, the differentiating terms are White and Black; the same forces are used by both, and similar laws, for there are no special laws in this universe for any special set of workers in Nature's secrets. But the path of the untruthful and the wicked, while seemingly easy at first, is hard at last, for the black workers are the friends of no one, they are each against the other as soon as interest demands, and that may be anytime. It is said that final annihilation of the personal soul awaits those who deal in the destructive side of Nature's hall of experience.

Student.—Where should I look for the help I need in the right life, the right study?

Sage.—Within yourself is the light that lighteth every man who cometh here. The light of the Higher Self and of the Mahatma are not different from each other. Unless you find your Self, how can you understand Nature?

IX

Student.—What is the effect of trying to develop the power of seeing in the astral light before a person is initiated?

Sage.—Seeing in the astral light is not done through Manas, but through the senses, and hence has to do entirely with sense-perception removed to a plane different from this, but more illusionary. The final

perceiver or judge of perception is in Manas, in the Self; and therefore the final tribunal is clouded by the astral perception if one is not so far trained or initiated as to know the difference, and able to tell the true from the false. Another result is a tendency to dwell on this subtle sense-perception, which at last will cause an atrophy of Manas for the time being. This makes the confusion all the greater, and will delay any possible initiation all the more or forever. Further, such seeing is in the line of phenomena, and adds to the confusion of the Self which is only beginning to understand this life; by attempting the astral another element of disorder is added by more phenomena due to another plane, thus mixing both sorts up. The Ego must find its basis and not be swept off hither and thither. The constant reversion of images and ideas in the astral light, and the pranks of the elementals there, unknown to us as such and only seen in effects, still again add to the confusion. To sum it up, the real danger from which all others flow or follow is in the confusion of the Ego by introducing strange things to it before the time.

Student.—How is one to know when he gets real occult information from the Self within?

Sage.—Intuition must be developed and the matter judged from the true philosophical basis, for if it is contrary to true general rules it is wrong. It has to be known from a deep and profound analysis by which we find out what is from egotism alone and what is not; if it is due to egotism, then it is not from the Spirit and is untrue. The power to know does not come from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but mostly from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits that light to shine down into the brain-mind. As the brain-mind is the receiver in the waking state, it has to be purified from sense-perception, and the truest way to do this is by combining philosophy with the highest outward and inward virtue.

Student.—Tell me some ways by which intuition is to be developed.

Sage.—First of all by giving it exercise, and second by not using it for purely personal ends. Exercise means that it must be followed through mistakes and bruises until from sincere attempts at use it comes to its own strength. This does not mean that we can do wrong and leave the results, but that after establishing conscience on a right basis by following the golden rule, we give play to the intuition and add to its strength. Inevitably in this at first we will make errors, but soon if we are sincere

it will grow brighter and make no mistake. We should add the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not. They say the Self is the only reality. The brain must be given larger views of life, as by the study of the doctrine of reincarnation, since that gives a limitless field to the possibilities in store. We must not only be unselfish, but must do all the duties that Karma has given us, and thus intuition will point out the road of duty and the true path of life.

Student.—Are there any Adepts in America or Europe?

Sage.—Yes, there are and always have been. But they have for the present kept themselves hidden from the public gaze. The real ones have a wide work to do in many departments of life and in preparing certain persons to have a future work to do. Though their influence is wide they are not suspected, and that is the way they want to work for the present. There are some also who are at work with certain individuals in some of the aboriginal tribes in America, as among those are Egos who are to do still more work in another incarnation, and they must be prepared for it now. Nothing is omitted by these Adepts. In Europe it is the same way, each sphere of work being governed by the time and the place.

Student.—What is the meaning of the five-pointed star?

Sage.—It is the symbol of the human being who is not an Adept, but is now on the plane of the animal nature as to his life-thoughts and development inside. Hence it is the symbol of the race. Upside down it means death or symbolizes that. It also means, when upside down, the other or dark side. It is at the same time the cross endowed with the power of mind, that is, man.

Student.—Is there a four-pointed star symbol?

Sage.—Yes. That is the symbol of the next kingdom below man, and pertains to the animals. The right kind of clairvoyant can see both the five- and the four-pointed star. It is all produced by the intersections of the lines or currents of the astral light emanating from the person or being. The four-pointed one means that the being having but it has not as yet developed Manas.

Student.—Has the mere figure of a five-pointed star any power in itself?

Sage.—It has some, but very little. You see it is used by all sorts of people for trademarks and the like, and for the purposes of organiza-

tions, yet no result follows. It must be actually used by the mind to be of any force or value. If so used, it carries with it the whole power of the person to whom it may belong.

Student.—Why is the sword so much spoken of in practical Occultism by certain writers?

Sage.—Many indeed of these writers merely repeat what they have read. But there is a reason, just as in warfare the sword has more use for damage than a club. The astral light corresponds to water. If you try to strike in or under water with a club, it will be found that there is but little result, but a sharp knife will cut almost as well under water as out of it. The friction is less. So in the astral light a sword used on that plane has more power to cut than a club has, and an elemental for that reason will be more easily damaged by a sword than by a club or a stone. But all of this relates to things that are of no right value to the true student, and are indulged in only by those who work in dark magic or foolishly by those who do not quite know what they do. It is certain that he who uses the sword or the club will be at last hurt by it. And the lesson to be drawn is that we must seek for the true Self that knows all Occultism and all truth, and has in itself the protecting shield from all dangers. That is what the ancient Sages sought and found, and that is what should be striven after by us.

To Turn the Mind

The greatest need, then, is to have a right and true philosophy of life, for the following of it will not only bring relief from the many forms of suffering, but a knowledge that will lead humanity to greater heights. The Theosophist works to relieve the *cause* in the only way possible. Doubtless, if Theosophists were more numerous, they would be found relieving every possible distress to the best of their ability; but, unfortunately for the world, they are few, and are thus compelled to put all their energy into calling attention to the true nature of man, and to a philosophy of life, so that more and more minds may be turned that way, and the day of relief brought nearer.

—Robert Crosbie

KNOWLEDGE FROM DOCTRINE

H. P. BLAVATSKY'S method of introducing her students to the rich storehouses of the Secret Doctrine served as a preventive against any easily-achieved systematization or oversimplification. To know Theosophy one is driven to individual correlations and syntheses which alone can comprehend the many subtleties involved in her manner of instruction. Even so, Madame Blavatsky's articles in *Lucifer* and the *Theosophist* warn against the human tendency to dogmatize. In one place, for example, she remarked that "every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart." She goes on to point out that the judgment of Theosophical students, like that of other human beings, is "warped and unconsciously biased"—which can easily mean confusing a familiarity with doctrine with actual knowledge.

Now the dissemination of doctrines has, since the time of H.P.B., been regarded as a natural work for students of Theosophy. Yet a doctrine is neither experience nor knowledge. Hence, critics of Theosophical education may often feel that those who become Theosophists have little more self-knowledge than anyone else. Particularly in regard to the instruction of children it may be wondered if there is any significant difference between the indoctrination of a "belief" in reincarnation and the teachings of the representatives of orthodox religion. If a belief is held because it is imagined that it *should* be held, or because it pleases the believer, the psychological attitude may certainly appear to be the same. The legitimate question thus arises as to whether belief in a particular doctrine, such as that of reincarnation, actually leads to knowledge. On this point, however, the Theosophist may logically affirm that it does, and the steps in reason which allow this affirmation are interesting to consider.

The study of the means by which knowledge is acquired naturally involves, first, reflection upon "the psychology of discovery." Information may come to hand by happenstance, but the difference between the acquisition of information or data and the acquirement of knowledge is determined by a man's *desire* to know more than he presently knows. He must, in other words, *imagine* that there is something worth knowing, but presently beyond his grasp. Those who have discovered "new"

laws in the physical sciences have first been moved by an intuitive feeling that there is an explanatory principle as yet unknown to science.

Every broad belief in regard to man's nature and destiny is an attempt to enclose areas outside the region of immediate experience. The more limited perspectives, whether they allow man an existence in two worlds —this one, and the next, whether Heaven or Hell—or circumscribe him, as in the materialist view, to earthly life, foreshorten human destiny considerably. The perspective of reincarnation, on the other hand, suggests endless opportunities for the extension of knowledge. Because reincarnation-philosophy holds that continued immortality is the birthright of every human being—none may be eternally saved or eternally damned—we are encouraged to regard any man's present storehouse of wisdom as but a fraction of his potential. Further, since our own faults and failings may, if reincarnation be true, find ultimate correction, we must think the same for others whose faults and failings seem greater than our own. What we come to respect in a man, on this view, is his capacity to grow.

The Theosophical Society was formed on a basis which refused to require of the members a belief in any particular doctrine or doctrines. Aside from the "psychic students," those drawn to the comparative study of religions and philosophies proposed in the Second Object, responded because they saw value in balancing one's own religious perspectives with the contrasting perspectives of others. Such comparative study, carried on in an atmosphere allowing "a hearing and fair chance to all," encouraged respect for any sincere beliefs and it was naturally felt that individuals—and finally whole societies—would enlarge their sympathies and understanding. The First Object of the Society, embodying the goal of Universal Brotherhood, was therefore to be served by all activities undertaken under the heading of the Second Object.

Since Madame Blavatsky was the guiding inspiration behind the nineteenth-century rebirth of the Theosophical platform, she became, inevitably, the chief Teacher of the Theosophists. Her explanation of the meaning of reincarnation, historically, philosophically, and psychologically, was sufficient to convince most students of Theosophy that this doctrine contained the fundamental truth regarding destiny and immortality. Many, if not all, found that the implications of reincar-

nation immeasurably expanded their perspective on any and all subjects—and, even more important, gave the very *conception* of the expansion of knowledge unlimited scope. As generation succeeded generation in the Theosophical tradition, the children of Theosophists "acquired" the doctrine of reincarnation from their parents. They were taught not only what the conception of reincarnation means, but also that it is a "true teaching." For some Theosophists, therefore, the teaching of reincarnation would never be questioned, nor examined as merely one of many doctrines. For other young Theosophists, the time would come when this particular doctrine would find itself opposed, in intellectual circles, by various forms of materialistic skepticism which would deny validity to an "unprovable" theory of immortality.

It is at this point that the young people who have been "taught" reincarnation during childhood may be compelled to recognize the difference between *any* doctrine and the sort of knowledge that one knows for himself, of a certainty. Then, the next natural step is to encourage the *idea* of reincarnation to be reborn afresh from its doctrinal womb. It becomes evident that if the credentials of reincarnation are to be critically examined, the mind must come into play, and all of the implications of reincarnation-philosophy developed according to the mental capacities of the newly born "student."

An open-minded rethinking of the idea of reincarnation may lead to a less assertive pronouncement of its verity, but it will also lead to recognition that no other idea can serve as a greater inducement to continuing discovery. Though reincarnation may certainly be called a doctrine, it is by no means specious to insist that the ideas contained in the First and Second Objects of the Theosophical Movement are most naturally embraced by reincarnationists.

It is this reciprocal relationship between the platform of the Second Object and the doctrine of reincarnation which provides the Theosophical Movement with an almost unique spirit of dynamic inquiry. Those who begin study of philosophy with reincarnation will turn naturally to the sympathetic comparison of various religious convictions, and will see the justice of "allowing a fair hearing and chance for all." Conversely, the man who undertakes a comparative study of religion and philosophy, in the hope that true wisdom about man may be gained, will almost inevitably conclude that reincarnation-philosophy is crucial to that *gnosis* which underlies all inspired religious teachings.

I AM FOR ALL

I am for all of every time and place,
The past, the present and the future mine.
I am of every tongue and every race,
I am the beast, the human, the divine.
Mine were the aeons before worlds began;
Mine were the long, long courses of the stars;
Mine all the monstrous forms of life that ran
Before the time of man's more monstrous wars.
Mine were the kings and queens, princes and lords
Of all domains in the tyrannic East.
Mine have been all the Empires of all swords;
Would that they all forevermore had ceased.
I have been priest of every church and creed;
I have been devotee at every shrine;
Mine have been all the prayers of human need,
And I have tasted all communion wine.
Yea, and I have been slave of every land,
Helot and serf, and African and Jew.
I have been one of every thieving band,
And I have sailed with every pirate crew.
My cheek has burned black under Afric suns;
My skin has yellowed with great China's age;
The blood of all the brown men in me runs;
I know the hatchet and the red man's rage.
Woman and man am I; my mother's veins
Live in me equal with my father's loins:
I have known motherhood's vicarious pains,
And all the labor written on man's coins.
Therefore, I am for all, since I have been
Part of the human whole forevermore.
I also can claim Abraham as kin,
And say, before he was, I am of yore.
And I shall know, some day, and somewhere yet,
A larger consciousness than mine or thine;
Shall meet within myself what all have met,
And plumb the memories of the divine.

—ROBERT WHITAKER

OBSCURED GENIUSES

MOST students of Theosophy are familiar with the oft-repeated phrase, "obscured adepts." But few seem to have given thought to the idea that, in addition to the adepts, there may be present among us in this Movement those who can be properly designated only as "obscured geniuses"— "genius," in this case, referring to individuals of high intellectual or cultural achievement, though somewhat lower in the scale of evolution than the *adept.* Synesius, the prominent Church father of early Christianity, refers to "the sacred tribe of heroes" who inhabit the earth, and who give assistance to mankind in even the smallest of concerns. Among this sacred tribe, says Wm. Q. Judge, are those whom he calls *obscured adepts,* individuals of character and power who have passed through many initiations in other ages, but who are not now aware of their inner heritage. The lives and works of such men as Thomas Vaughan, Raymond Lully, Sir Thomas More, Jacob Boehme and Paracelsus, for example, have exerted a profound influence through the centuries, providing "seed-thoughts" for the new mental soil of the race. In addition to these historical characters, says Mr. Judge, "there are countless numbers of men and women now living who have passed through certain initiations during their past lives upon earth, and who produce effects in many directions quite unknown to themselves now. These are, in fact, old friends of the 'sacred tribe of heroes'."

Present-day students of Theosophy would hardly be inclined to identify anyone among those whom they know as "obscured adepts"—and there is a question whether the average theosophist possesses the ability to recognize an adept even if he should see one. It is not too difficult, however, to detect in others such qualities and powers of mind and soul as would seem to entitle them, suggestively, to the title of "obscured geniuses." For what, after all, is a genius? Is he not simply a person of outstanding creative ability and a remarkable capacity for work? It is highly essential, in our efforts toward brotherhood, that the quality of "obscured" genius be recognized.

From the theosophical point of view, the obscured genius may be thought of as an individual who in past incarnations has mastered some particular department of his inner or outer being, or some specialized

branch of the arts or sciences, but who now, for purposes of balanced soul-development, is unconscious of these achievements, and is condemned, so to say, to work along other lines. Is this an easy undertaking for the Soul, do we think? Is it easy for the highly trained architect, for example, fired with the enthusiasm of his talent, to content himself with the humdrum duties, say, of bookkeeping or salesmanship? Is it easy for one proficient in music, one who in other lives, perhaps, was outstanding as a performing artist, to resign himself to auto, television, or radio repair? Is it a simple undertaking for any man of talent, even though he possess a vision of the great Plan, to settle down without complaint to a homely, useful life of devotion, and what is even more important—to appreciate the advantages of such a life?

The Theosophical Movement may be described, in some respects, as the great crucible of humanity. Into its vortex are drawn individuals, without respect of race, creed, or sex, who have attained a certain evolutionary ratio or vibration, and who can be of service to mankind. This crucible is a necessary provision of Nature at a certain stage of psychic and manasic development. "*For occultists must be found and fostered and prepared for coming ages when power will be needed* and pretensions go for naught." And the Great Lodge, it is said, is going on with its laborious process of "sifting out the *living germs* from the masses of men."

Every human being, from the broadest point of view, is undergoing the trials and rigors of discipleship; for all are parts of the great evolutionary stream to which our field of activity belongs, and all are under the operation of Law. Even children—especially those who are destined to take an important part in human affairs—feel early in their lives the melting-heat of trial. Where is the individual who has failed to observe the insistent manner in which this Law works? The growing boy, for example, who is beginning to sense his expanding powers, and to exaggerate his physical strength and importance, is brought head-on into collision with another "burgeoning soul" from around the corner, and comes home with a bloody nose. This is a necessary part of his training and, in spite of stern protests from parents, the Law works on, executing the decrees of Soul, preparing a child of destiny for future duty and responsibility—and at the same time protecting parents, if only they could realize it, from the assumption that the child is "theirs." Karma thus provides natural checks and hurdles for sprouting soul powers—

otherwise, tangential growth and development would inevitably result.

It is under this same law of soul growth, only in an intensified form, that the theosophical crucible functions, checking even potential adepts and geniuses in their one-sided developments. And though the disciplines at this higher level are even more rigid and severe than at lower stages, the genius of old must "still the inward strife," and apply himself wholeheartedly to the moral and *manasic* lessons resident in the work at hand.

Those who are acquainted with the theosophical doctrine of Karma will appreciate more readily the occultism of St. Paul's extraordinary injunction to the Romans that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord"—that is to say, to those who serve the *Law.* Is it a blind, unintelligent force, do we think, that determines the nation, family, and circumstances into which an individual is born? Is it a mere "stroke of chance" that brings into one's life the tests, trials, and experiences that are so difficult to bear, but that later prove to have been blessings in disguise? The currents of rebirth, it is said, are guided by the Dhyan Chohans, those primeval intelligences from whom man's special evolution proceeds, and who are the agents of Karma. And the power that guides man's destiny and obscures for a time the vision of past glory and achievement is sometimes none other than the innate protective power of his own soul and spirit. It is this impersonal soul and spirit, the Universal Over-Soul of Emerson, with which every being is fundamentally identical, that places the ancient genius in positions of mediocre toil and obscurity or in the company of those who irk; for in no other way can the blemishes and defects of character be removed.

What, then, of the attitude and outlook of those sincere workers in the Movement who feel themselves constrained, whose hard-earned talents *seem* to serve no present good? What should be their aspiration, their determination, their resolve? What direction should their energies take? The philanthropist, inspired with the vision of his ideal, often has to lose himself for decades in the preliminary work and planning essential to its fulfillment. The successful painter or musician may have to study and practice for years before exhibiting his work to the public. Why, then, should not the theosophist, who is learning to think in terms of ages rather than years, likewise be content to remain obscured, even for lifetimes if necessary, in the far more important work of solidifying the character and of helping others to do the same?

The Theosophical Movement and its work will not remain forever hidden and unrecognized in the world. Nor will the obscured adepts and geniuses remain forever obscured. Time was in the past when mankind was of one religion and one tongue, when Adept-Kings counselled, and universal peace and harmony prevailed. It is at such cycles that architecture achieves its greatest splendor, that painting and sculpture are fashioned upon the laws of uniformity and analogy, and that government and business are pursued, not for purposes of personal income and fortune, but for the benefits they confer upon the whole human race. And the cycles and the times of grandeur will surely come again. Who knows but that in the sixth Great Race, or even in one of the sub-divisions of our present Race, the "divine fragment," or soul, which is struggling side by side with you, and helps to form the Lodge to which you belong, may become the architect of a new and even more grandiose Karnak or Ellora or producer of the Mystery Plays?

Who knows but that these innate driving "urges," both in fellow-associates and in one's self, so frustrating to the personality and so difficult for those around us to understand, may blossom forth, when controlled and under fairer skies, into full-blown powers of adeptship? It is in this bright and enchanting future that the obscured genius of today will come into his own—for in the meantime, in the quiet, patient performance of simple duty, he will have developed, in addition to his special aptitudes and talents, those virtues of mind and soul which alone make possible lasting achievement.

LENDING A PRESENCE

Einstein himself must have been conscious of the importance of the solution he had arrived at. He was conscious of living through a supreme experience. He knew no greater human emotion: no violent passion or deep distress could compare in intensity with the transformation of the universe which had taken place before his eyes . . . . Perhaps it was struggle required to reach his final convictions, perhaps it was the very intensity of his creative powers, but he seemed (was it from birth or from that moment?) unconscious of everything life could offer him and impervious to emotion. In his affections as well as in his thoughts, he seemed to be only lending a presence which he might withdraw at any time.

—ANTONINA VALLENTIN

SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION

THEOSOPHIST is a name by which many mystics at various periods of history have called themselves. All real lovers of divine Wisdom and Truth had, and have, a right to the name, rather than those who, appropriating the qualification, live lives or perform actions opposed to the principles of Theosophy. However, "that they have had but little direct influence on society" is true of the Theosophists of the last three centuries, but not of the later ones; for the Theosophists of the nineteenth century have already visibly impressed themselves on modern literature, and introduced the desire and craving for some philosophy in place of the blind dogmatic faith of yore, among the most intelligent portions of mankind. Such is the difference between past and modern Theosophy.

The Theosophical Society is international in the highest sense in that its members comprise men and women of all races, creeds, and forms of thought, who work together for one object, the improvement of humanity. Intrinsically, Theosophy is the most serious movement of this age; and one, moreover, which threatens the very life of most of the time-honored humbugs, prejudices, and social evils of the day. And since Theosophy does not agree with any one sect or creed, it is considered the enemy of all, because it teaches that they are all, more or less, mistaken. In order to awaken brotherly feeling among nations we have to assist in the international exchange of useful arts and products, by advice, information, and co-operation with all worthy individuals and associations (provided, however, add the statutes, "that no benefit or percentage shall be taken by the Society or the 'Fellows' for its or their corporate services").

Theosophy is essentially unsectarian, and work for it forms the entrance to the Inner life. But none can enter there save the man himself in the highest and truest spirit of Brotherhood; and any other attempt at entrance will either be futile or he will lie blasted at the threshold. The seventh rule of the ancient Rosicrucian brotherhoods, which is universal among all true secret societies, "the Rosy-Crux becomes and is not *made,*" is more than the generality of men can bear to have applied to them. But let no one suppose that of the candidates who fail any will divulge to the world even the trifle they may have learned, as

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NOTE.—Collated from standard Theosophical writings.

some Masons do. None know better than themselves how unlikely it is that a neophyte should ever talk of what was imparted to him. Thus these societies will go on and hear themselves denied without uttering a word until the day shall come for them to throw off their reserve and show how completely they are masters of the situation.

Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the conditions of mankind. But in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. *As individuals* we may do so. But as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do. The function of Theosophists is to open men's hearts and understandings to charity, justice and generosity, attributes which belong specifically to the human kingdom and are natural to man when he has developed the qualities of a human being. The Society as such takes absolutely no part in any national or party politics. The reasons are that political action must necessarily vary with the circumstances of the time and with the idiosyncrasies of individuals. While from the very nature of their position as Theosophists the members of the T.S. are agreed on the principles of Theosophy, it does not thereby follow that they agree on every other subject. As a society they can act together in matters which are common to all—that is in Theosophy itself; as individuals, each is left perfectly free to follow out his or her particular line of political thought and action, so long as this does not conflict with Theosophical principles or hurt the T.S.

The question is often asked: What have you as an organization to do with labor, with legal questions, labor-saving forces, with education, with society? We have nothing to do with them. Is it not true that man, if he has a knowledge as to how he ought to live, needs no laws whatever? Was not St. Paul right when he spoke of that and said you could become your own law? Knowing the truth, you need no law. If there are to be laws, let them be passed and execute them, but the T.S. has nothing to do with them as such. Every brother in the Society must obey the law of the land in which he lives, for he would be a poor Theosophist if he did not. The T.S. has nothing to do with education. Its members may have as much to do with it as they please, but they have no right to say what is the T.S.'s idea of education. They can only say "That's my idea of it." And always they must and shall preserve these distinctions.

If a Theosophist is born to be a legislator, let him legislate as a citizen and not as a Theosophist, or if he is born to be a judge, let him be a judge and skilled lawyer. They ask also about marriage. We have nothing to do with it as a Society. We know there are many kinds of marriage, sometimes merely by tying a string, sometimes by walking around the fire. As a body we have nothing to do with these forms nor interfere with them. And as to prayer, if you want to pray, pray. But if you pray, and if you say you have a certain belief, live up to it.

Were it not for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, healthy divergences of opinion would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge. It is not a dull agreement on intellectual questions, or an impossible unanimity as to all details of work that is needed, but a true, hearty, earnest devotion to our cause which will lead each to help his brother to the utmost of his power to *work* for that cause, whether or not we agree as to the exact method of carrying on that work.

Karma will reconcile all our differences of opinion. A strict account of the actual work will be taken, and the "wages" earned will be recorded to our credit. But as strict an account will be taken of the work which any one, by indulging in personal grievances, may have hindered his neighbor from doing. Think you it is a light thing to hinder the force of the T.S., as represented in the person of any of its leaders, from doing its appointed work? So surely as there is a Karmic power behind the Society will that power exact the account for its hindrance, and he is a rash and ignorant man who opposes his puny self to it in the execution of its appointed task.

Slowly but surely the tide creeps up and covers the once dry shores of Materialism, and, though priests may howl, demanding "the suppression of Theosophy with a firm hand" and a venal press may try to help them, they have neither the power nor the knowledge to produce one backward ripple, for the Master-hand is guided by omniscient intelligence propelled by a gigantic force, and—*works behind the scene.*

So long as the T.S. has a few devoted members willing to work for it without reward and thanks, so long as a few good Theosophists support it with occasional donations, so long will it exist, and nothing can crush it. Our duty is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions; to

oppose and counteract—after due investigations and proof of its irrational nature—bigotry in every form, religious, scientific, or social, and *cant* above all, whether as religious sectarians or as belief in miracles or anything supernatural. What we have to do is to seek to obtain *knowledge* of all the laws of nature, and to diffuse it; to encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern people, the so-called Occult Sciences, based on the true knowledge of nature instead of, as at present, on superstitious beliefs based on blind faith and authority. The Theosophical Society or "Universal Brotherhood" declared in 1875 its three chief objects to be, namely: Brotherhood of man without distinction of race, colour, religion, or social position; the serious study of the ancient world-religions for purposes of comparison and the selection therefrom of universal ethics; and third the study and development of the latent divine powers in man.

On the day when Theosophy will have accomplished its most holy and most important mission, namely to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and bent on a pure altruistic work, not a labor with selfish motives—on that day only will Theosophy become higher than any nominal brotherhood of man. Let the encouragement we draw from a survey of the results accomplished, serve to spur us on to greater efforts and more strenuous exertions. Let it make all feel that there is a power behind the Society which will give us the strength we need, which will enable us to move the world, if we will but unite and work as one mind, one heart.

It is an unfortunate fact that there are more misconceptions and misapplications of Theosophy among its would-be students than there is of real understanding. Most of this is due to the self-acclaimed leaders of societies who are very prominent in the public eye, and who proclaim and issue their own ideas, interpretations, and speculations as Theosophy pure and simple. No one would have a word to say if these exponents chose some other name under which to promulgate their ideas, but to present the latter as Theosophy, the *Message* delivered to the world by Masters, is to our mind the greatest imaginable crime against humanity. Every presentation of Truth given to the world has been vitiated in a similar way, being filtered through the minds of the original disciples to the disciples of the latter, and so on for generations, until but little was left of the spirit of the Message.

No individual need ever fail. No society need fail. All *can* fail, and

all *will* fail, just in the degree that they fail to study Theosophy, to adhere to the program of the Masters, to follow the lines laid down. All, whether individuals or societies, that have so far failed can retrace their steps, can retrieve their position, by a return to the Source and a resumption of work along the original lines of unity of aim, purpose and teaching. These must be constantly borne in mind. But before they can be borne in mind, they must be *born*—in mind and heart and brain. The Masters have said that they have "no secrets to impart to a select few."

Gandhi's Keynote

Internal purification was the key-note of all the activities of Gandhiji. He never missed an opportunity to emphasize "the futility of mere external activity" and the need for "intensive internal development." He wanted the Congress to cease to be "a begging association" and to become "primarily a self-purification association designed to achieve its goal by developing internal strength." The constructive programme fitted into his scheme because it was "the work of internal growth" and helped in "developing strength from within." It was his ambition to make this strength irresistible. It was a sort of prophylaxis. This is another basic principle which occupies a very important place in his philosophy of life and accounts for many of his attitudes and decisions. For instance, he rarely speculated, when taking a decision, as to how the Government would react to it; his sole anxiety was to see that the decision was right from our own point of view—taking into consideration, of course, all factors—moral as well as political. In the course of an explanation of the Patna decision in 1934, he was asked how in his view the Government would react to it. "That means," he replied, "you will shape your policy according to what the Government will say or do. The idea never crossed my mind as to what the Government would say or do, as I drafted my statement. I only considered whether I was true to myself and to my country. Let us do what we want to do." Here is a key to the proper understanding of many of his decisions.

Chandrashanker Shukla

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

IT is said that all men are looking for truth, either consciously or unconsciously. Westerners depend mainly upon intellectual keenness to find the truth, while the Zen Buddhists, for example, depend upon intuition almost entirely, denouncing mere intellectualism as being ruinous to intuition. These two approaches are so entirely opposed that it would seem that they could not both be valuable. Is there one right way?

MAN as a Thinker has the power to reason from premises to conclusions. We call this intellect. Man as a Soul is a Knower with the power under certain conditions to bring that knowledge through on this plane. We call this intuition. It is a higher faculty than intellect, to be sure, and it would seem that the way of intuition is the way to go. But what are the "conditions" necessary to avail one's self of this higher faculty, which at present comes unbidden and often unrecognized? According to Theosophy, mind is the channel through which truth is perceived, whether it be mundane truth or the highest spiritual truth of the soul. If the mind is not clear, soul-knowledge cannot shine through. As the Zen master, Kyozan, puts it, "When the sky is clouded, the moon cannot shine out." Therefore it would seem that our task at present is to sweep away the clouds of the mind so that we may receive intuitional flashes more often and in a stronger degree than the usual vague feeling of what may or may not be true. Perhaps one of the first steps to take in clearing the mind is to discard our false conceptions and to examine our beliefs with honesty. Above all, we must have a higher kind of desire to find the truth than mere intellectual leaning; otherwise we will never have the moral strength and courage to pursue Truth wherever it may lead.

The Zen Buddhist is not concerned with the abstract and remote but with the practical and immediate. His concern seems more with the practical *fact* of Brotherhood than the metaphysical theory of it. This does not seem in reality to be opposed to the Theosophical approach of learning principles and striving to make practical applications of them in daily life.

Joseph Campbell, in his Hero with a Thousand Faces, *stresses the educative importance of the ancient "initiatory rites"—which, to say the*

least, are confused, and sometimes seem non-existent, in our culture today. Since we have few "growing-guides" to offer young people in our present society, should it therefore be assumed that it is vitally necessary that we make sure they get a good grounding in a specific ethics of Theosophy more than in the also-theosophical broad philosophical attitude toward all ideas of all faiths and systems?

The doors of adulthood, leading to becoming one's own authority, seemed quite clear and simple in ancient times. Each child knew, as he was growing up, that there would be a time when he would be forced to give up certain dependencies—attachments which identified him with childhood. He accepted this fact and welcomed a decision made by his society which he was obliged to follow. Today we are in an age of overemphasizing the attempt to "understand" the child and his problems, and we thus have either a complete lack of requirements for youth or else the requirements are requested in such a way that merely confuse —and hold the child back from maturity rather than aid him to grow.

The ancient initiatory rites served to aid the young person in becoming his "own mother and father," his own encourager, and also his own critic and setter of high standards. This, obviously, is a step in the direction of becoming a philosopher, a self-dependent searcher. Today, as was probably true in most ages, few are philosophers *all the time;* we may manage a philosophical, theosophical attitude some of the time, or even most of the time, but we cannot, at this stage, constantly maintain it. Thus doctrines are quite essential as points of focus as well as offering "relative" truths to which we can come back and from which we can take a new line of philosophic endeavor.

However, doctrines are to be used, not just believed in; there is always the danger that doctrines, no matter how "valid" they be, will fall into mere dogmas and beliefs if not utilized and incorporated into one's philosophy—which should be ever-growing and rebuilt.

Therefore, as we can see, the problem of offering a philosophical theosophical orientation to a growing child is not an easy one. Realizing that a very strong part of the nature of a child is to believe, because he does not have sophisticated facility to reason, it is sometimes too easy to think that one is getting across what is really basic, Theosophically, when the child responds with assent to particular doctrines. On the other hand, a child is also able and eager to be led along the path of philosophical search; to discover the variances in nature, people, ideas.

and then at the same time to find, with delight, the basic similarities among them all.

The most interesting aspect of childhood is revealed by the genuine desire to understand, to inquire, investigate—with whatever equipment one has. This is quite a "broad philosophical attitude" in itself. And it would seem that if this innate tendency is developed, the "doctrines" of Theosophy, will be held with individual conviction, and thus carried and used throughout life, rather than just "believed" as "nice ideas."

History has repeatedly shown that no true educational endeavor ever emphasized just "doctrines," but rather focussed on an unbiased questing for truth.

Systems upon systems of philosophy, religions, and ethics have been molded from men's minds down through history in an attempt to find the "right way" to truth. But, as we instinctively know and are repeatedly told by H.P.B., there is no *one* "right way" to enlightenment for all men. "Implicit in Madame Blavatsky's words, moreover, is the conclusion that a man of truly philosophic mind will eventually discover the eternal verities and those teachers who, throughout the ages, have expressed them." It would seem that we have here an answer; for each one eventually becomes a philosopher and sees that, in another sense, "the Path is one." Yet every student of Theosophy has had the experience of being quite thrilled upon reading "theosophical philosophy" as expounded by a person who is entirely devoid of any orthodox Theosophical education. We respect such an acquaintance, and often learn quite a lot from him. This person is blazing his own path to truth and, along the way, is making all true philosophy and doctrine *his*—a part of his essential being, rather than retaining them as mere beliefs. This *is* Theosophical ethics.

It would not appear erroneous to think that, since there are as many avenues to truth as there are creative minds to conceive it, a person should strive to view *all* roads open to him. It would seem that he would be attempting to find a "short cut" if he did not *want* to at least view all approaches available to him in his never-ending adventure towards balance and reverence for Life. The determination to seek breadth *is* one half of the Theosophical ethic. The other half is self-induced commitment.

THEOSOPHY ALIVE!

HOW many students have not at some time felt surfeited with philosophical or doctrinal expression? Even the classic statements on Theosophy by H. P. Blavatsky, we may feel, are only "words" which continuous repetition robs of dynamic meaning.

This may be the time to apply to one's self the admonition that a high aspiration or spiritual ideal turns to poison in the system when not acted upon. And the expression "not acted upon," is used advisedly. By acting on Theosophy is here meant, acted upon *in the mind*—the real plane of action. Truth can be cerebrated about from here to eternity without giving birth to one ensouled perception that from the depth to circumference of one's being vibrates with such an irresistible power that it is simultaneously willing, feeling, thinking, being, doing. *The Bhagavad-Gita* affirms, for example, that one who is confirmed in the immortality of man's soul is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass. What a chasm between such a realization, and merely *saying,* "Never was I not"; between intellectual appreciation and actual incarnation into the ideas one is convinced are true!

If one desires to gain non-vicariously the feeling that these things are possibilities, he would do well to consider the experience of William Q. Judge. He had been aspiring, he said, to enlarge his idea of brotherhood, but found that practice in benevolence would not give it its full growth. "I had to find some means of reaching further, and struck on this, which is as old as old age." He continues:

> I am not separate from anything. "I am that which is." That is, I am Brahma, and Brahma is everything. But being in an illusionary world, I am surrounded by certain appearances that seem to make me separate. So I will proceed to mentally state and accept that I am all these illusions. I am my friends,—and then I went to them in general and in particular. I am my enemies; then I felt them all. I am the poor and the wicked; I am the ignorant. Those moments of intellectual gloom are the moments when I am influenced by those ignorant ones who are myself. All this in my nation. But there are many nations, and to those I go in mind; I feel and I am them all, with what they hold of wisdom or evil. All, all is myself. Unwisely, I was then about to stop, but the whole is Brahma, so I went to the Devas and Asuras; the elemental world, that too is myself. After pursuing this course a while, I found

> it easier to return to a contemplation of all men as myself. It is a good method and ought to be pursued, for it is a step toward getting into contemplation of the All.

Another challenging statement from the same source is: "Formulate to yourself certain things you hold to be true and increase your faith in them." Let us try this with some of the ABC's of theosophical philosophy. One axiom is: all is life; everything is alive; there is no dead atom anywhere. Do you really believe it? The ink on this page, the paper pulp—do you feel it to be alive? The chair you sit on, the floor, the walls, the air you breathe? The seeming void of empty space? The hard stone of these "soulless" buildings in this prison of a city where the sky is nearly shut out by steel and concrete—are these too alive? Is the earth itself a miserable lump of clay, or a radiant orb of singing, dancing centers of intelligent force, and are you one with it all? really *one?* Go through a week, just *one* week absorbed in this train of thinking and the world will never again appear the same. Robert Crosbie seems to have used this method in dwelling upon the natural phenomenon we call a "tree."

> Consider a tree, for instance: first the tree is seen with its trunk, branches, leaves and what not; then the tree within the bark, the veins of the tree; then the various arteries through which the sap, the blood of the tree, flows; then the pulsation of the heart of the tree in the root, which causes the circulation of the blood (sap) to flow, and then the nature of the lives that cause the expression of the tree—thus bringing gradually the sense of the feeling of the nature of the being, which we call "tree." That is "permeability" carried to its highest point.

He adds that "if the process is once carried out with the tree, to whatever extent we may be able to carry it, the reflection of a tree upon our visual organ will always carry with it that sense of life and being which we have gained of it."

Consider another verity, "I am not my body"; or, as the *Gita* elaborates it: "The devotee who knows the divine truth thinketh 'I am doing nothing' in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing; even when speaking, letting go or taking, opening or closing his eyes, he sayeth, 'the senses and organs move by natural impulse to their appropriate objects'." Here is indeed a profitable exercise available each moment. When you rise in the morning think not "I have been asleep," or "I am getting up," but get the feeling you are *taking* your body up. At breakfast you are feeding the body. After

clothing the instrument you walk it to the train or bus and put it on that conveyance, etc., etc. In such simple ways gradually will be overcome the otherwise habitual feeling of self-identification with the marionette called the personal man. Even physical health is likely to improve, for the usual bodily tensions, the clenching of hands and jaws, the straining of eyes, the wrinkling of brow, and the hundred-and-one similar evidences of bodily attachment, will slowly disappear.

And equally important will be the application of this principle to others. For what you see of them is not the Real, is only a mask. Behind that mask *is* the Real! Greet that God, address It, sense Its needs, and even the most boring contacts may be transformed into acts of holy communion. The mind will have something stimulating to *think* about while one appears to be following the garrulous ramblings of some loquacious friend. Practice of this nature, consciously sustained, will in time doubtless become intelligently automatic so that one will always see the real in anything. H. P. Blavatsky tells us that "there are persons who never think with the higher faculties of their mind at all; those who do so are the minority and are thus, in a way, *beyond,* if not above, the average of human kind. These will think even upon ordinary matters on that *higher* plane. . . . Why is it that one person sees poetry in a cabbage or a pig with her little ones, while another will perceive in the loftiest things only their lowest and most material aspect . . . This difference depends simply on the innate power of the mind to think on the higher or on the lower plane, with the *astral* (in the sense given to the word by St. Martin) or with the physical brain."

Selecting one more example, let us touch upon the sevenfold constitution of man studied year in and year out in *The Ocean of Theosophy* classes in many ULT centers. One could intellectually study these seven principles forever without beginning to realize the division. One most fruitful way of making this highly metaphysical doctrine usable is offered below from Mr. Judge's *Path.*

> The best method to pursue is that of analysis along the line of the seven principles. So long as I look upon myself as a homogeneous whole, I contract my mental sphere into one dense and slowly vibrating mass. It is the picture of himself as uniform—as opposed to duality—which fetters the soul of man. The image he has made of himself is the prison house of his soul. When analysis comes into play he no longer says, "I crave," "I win," "I desire," "I sin." No longer, intoxicated by the fumes of his own passions, does he plunge into the ocean of

> sensuality. He says, as one aspect of desire comes before him, "In this the Kamic principle is active"; another he ascribes to undue stimulus of the linga-sarira; here he sees the lower manas prevailing, and here the flash of intuitive perception. He ascribes each act to its parent principle; each becomes to him a result of one of these principles; they are no longer himself, but he is the judge of them all, and analysis destroys the heady fumes of desire. *For desire ceases to attract us when we no longer identify it with ourself. . . .* By means of this cold analysis the personal mental image is broken up into a series of thought forms true in themselves, each one an image of the Universal, each instinct with a life of its own. The prison house is rent asunder, and man, the prisoner of himself, dazed, startled, but unbound, finds himself slowly emerging into the large fields of Universal Thought.

So-called "primitive" man has this advantage over his intellectual superiors: what ideas he *does* hold are to him living realities. Hence we call his religion "animism," the belief that all natural objects and the universe itself possess a soul. A story is told of a tribe of South American Indians who, upon being queried about their practice of frequently halting and resting when on the march, answered: "We are waiting for our souls to catch up!" Well, maybe that is what is needed when we have been reading or hearing too many ideas—we need to give ourselves the chance for our souls to "catch up," to become coordinated with the brain mind, to incarnate in the ideas already entertained, to take the position of synthesis, to gain the immensely satisfying, experience of seeing and feeling Theosophy ALIVE! While so engaged, one is not obliged to shut himself away from other ideas, though some restriction on prevalent reading and thinking habits will prove indispensable. Let his dwell upon one verity at a time as his keynote, allowing it to resound from periphery to core of his being. All the other tones and subtones of the scale of truth may then provide harmonious depth, breadth, and universal range to the melodic themes and dynamic rhythms derived from and through the self-chosen fundamental tonic. "And his mind being thus at ease, fixed upon one object, it embraceth wisdom from all sides."

ON THE LOOKOUT

Reincarnation and Contemporary Philosophy

Since the death of the distinguished English logician and metaphysician, John McTaggart, in 1925, only one scholar of international reputation has given extended treatment to "the theory of reincarnation." Professor C. J. Ducasse of Brown University, now retired, a past president of the American Philosophical Association, has produced two notable expositions of reincarnation-philosophy, the first occurring in the Paul Carus lectures titled *Nature, Mind and Death,* and the second, in various sections of Dr. Ducasse's most recent work, *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion.* (Both have frequently been referred to in Lookout.) Yet, even in academic circles, a conception of reincarnation comes to periodic rebirth, and especially is this true for the increasing number of Western students of philosophy who have approached the study of Eastern philosophy and religion with an appreciative mind. Since 1950, several discussions in *Philosophy East and West* have referred to the breadth of perspective afforded by reincarnation, and during the past two years an increasing interest in reincarnation is indicated by serious treatments of the theme.

Spiritual Experience the Prime Reality

In the winter edition of *Diogenes,* an international review of philosophy and humanistic studies, Prof. Olivier LaCombe, dean of the *Faculté des Lettres* of Lille University, shows the background for a natural belief in reincarnation in the Eastern world. The sages of the East, LaCombe explains, seek to measure all values in terms of progressive spiritual experience, and strive for philosophical synthesis which suggests an unending continuity of meaning in human existence. LaCombe writes:

> If it is true that all philosophy worthy of the name presents itself to us as a lucid reading of human experience articulated in a "coherent discourse," then there is no doubt that Indian thought is rich from a philosophical point of view. But what seems to us to characterize it primarily and distinctively is the incommensurable superiority which it attributes to experience as compared to any other kind of knowledge. Indeed, Indian thought holds, in the last analysis, that there is no expe-

rience except spiritual and absolute experience. Sensory experience itself, psychological experience, and, above all, aesthetic experience all resolve into spiritual experience, more or less camouflaged or disengaged. Since the first *Upanishads,* Indian thought has been based on an inverted pyramid—on the diamond point of spiritual experience. And so sure is India that she contains within herself a universal foundation that she multiplies the ways and means of approaching and discovering the spiritual. Yoga, a complete psychosomatic discipline, is perhaps the most skilfully devised of these methods, although it is not the only one.

Sense of Infinity: Theory of Cycles

A companion piece to Professor LaCombe's article is provided by the text of a lecture delivered at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1956 by Dr. K. Satchidananda Murty, who visited the United States as a member of the Indian Government's Committee on General Education. Under the above title, Dr. Murty extends the implication of Prof. LaCombe's remarks on the structure of Indian philosophy:

> In India, it might be said, nothing has limits. The light, the blaze of the tropical sun, is unlimited. He scorches, enervates, and yet sustains. The bright and limpid starry sky at night overwhelms the man in the plains. Living, thus, amid things which know no bounds, the Indian develops a sense of infinity. Nothing has an end—neither man nor nature, for unending seems to be the cyclic cosmic process. The life-giving spring, followed by the scorching summer, succeeded by the winter of cold breezes from Himalayan glaciers rotate in sequence. They fail not to come or to pass on. Order, *rta,* seems to be their essence. May not the same advent and disappearance, birth and death, be true as well of the world as a whole? The mighty world compared to which man seems so tiny and helpless, looms immense and without a beginning point. And how can this glorious thing have an end? Subject to fast disintegration, but ever resurrecting itself through an inner law of its own, the world is infinite. This sense of infinity was responsible for the theory of the cyclic rotation of the creations and the dissolutions of the world. In mythology as well as in philosophy this belief is accepted. All Indian systems accept the world process as infinite. It is infinite in the sense that it begins, stops, and recommences—but always continues.

An Excellent Summation

Dr. Murty's condensation of the meaning of reincarnation-philosophy contains both vitality and Theosophic accuracy. He writes:

The problem of evil and inequality is one of the most vexed problems in all philosophy, but all Indian systems adopt a uniform solution. We have already seen that the Indian's conception of the world as infinite will not allow him to think of creation *ex nihilo*. His sense of human dignity and of the worth and absoluteness of the human soul does not allow him to view it as created. The two combined lead to the theory of *karma*. Everyone can see that the world is imperfect, that there are inequalities, and that there is much suffering. But, since these cannot be inflicted upon souls by an external force, they must be the results of the soul's doing. Beginningless is the world; beginningless are the souls. What they are reaping now must have been sowed by them. No other power, divine or diabolical, can rule over the souls and inflict inequality and suffering upon them. The Hindu sages intuit the human soul as the grandest and the most mysterious thing in the world.

"The Tractless Horizons of Time"

The iniquity and the misery which souls are now experiencing is indeed a boon to them, for in the enjoyment of it they are recovering themselves from the fall—fall from the dignity which is the soul's inherent right. In the tractless horizons of time is lost the answer to the question, When did the souls fall from their inherent majesty and purity? When souls have worked off the effects of their fall, they will once again become free, not only free from old taints of evil and misery, but also free to fall once again, if they so will. The souls in Hindu philosophy have absolute freedom to do as they will. They can go to the hell they like in the way they like; and, reawakened, they might stand up, cast away the coils of ignorance and misery, and fly back to the glory that eternally awaits them. This, in short, is the theory of *karma* and of rebirth. Hindu philosophy tells us that nobody forced the souls to be born. They wanted to be born, and so they are born. Yearning to be born, to act, and to enjoy the fruits of actions possesses some of the souls, and down they descend into the world of mortality. They will continue to be here so long as they have not enjoyed the fruits of all they have done and willed in this and in past births and so long as they do not will to lift themselves up from mortality to immortality. This, clearly, is no philosophy of determinism but rather a philosophy of freedom.

Platonic Theosophy

It is also apparent that the study of Eastern philosophy and religion has led many Western philosophers to re-read Plato with a new attentiveness, and some have grasped that Plato's reincarnation is not an after-thought but integral with the other essentials of the Platonic view-

point. In the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1957, Dr. E. G. Parrinder of University College, Idaban, discusses "Varieties of Belief in Reincarnation," revealing his own appreciation of the perspectives he has gained during his research. Dr. Parrinder writes that, "In the last two centuries the knowledge of the teachings of Eastern religions that has come to Europe has brought to the attention of European thinkers the theory of reincarnation. It has not received the critical study that such a widely-held belief deserves, and again the tendency has been to dismiss it as unfounded or absurd. It is the unorthodox or the poet who has often seized upon the idea (sometimes too easily), Schopenhauer accepted the usefulness of the doctrine, at least as a myth conveying truth if not literal fact. Poets have found the notion attractive, from Wordsworth's apparent statement of pre-existence ("our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting") to Rossetti's claim to memory of past life ("I have been here before, but where or how I cannot tell"), and others from Browning to Masefield."

Dr. Parrinder continues:

> Some outstanding European thinkers have believed in reincarnation. The value of the theory as an explanation of the inequalities of life, by showing moral retribution to be implied in the circumstances of birth, was suggested by Pythagoras and by Plato; the latter especially brings this out in the famous myth of Er at the close of the *Republic*. Plato shows the disciplinary value of suffering, for of those who made an unhappy choice of destiny, 'More than half had come from heaven; which is to be explained by the fact of their never having felt the discipline of trouble.'
>
> Virgil, the Mysteries, and the Neoplatonists added their support to the doctrine. Plotinus again found in it a moral explanation of the problem of suffering. 'Such things as happen to the good without justice, as punishments, or poverty or disease, may be said to take place through offences committed in a former life.'

A Secret African Doctrine

Dr. Parrinder's years of study of mystical African beliefs have also led him to the conviction that various African conceptions of human rebirth may have derived originally from Indian sources. Dr. Parrinder writes:

> In tropical Africa, belief in rebirth is deeply enrooted. The studies made by anthropologists and other serious writers in many different parts of Africa, especially in the last forty years, have revealed deep-

> seated beliefs in reincarnation held by many different African peoples. Both the existence of African beliefs comparable with those of India and the distinctive characteristics of African beliefs are of considerable importance and deserve to be known to a wider public than has hitherto known of them. While some peoples in other continents have comparable ideas, it is from Africa that we now have a large body of solid evidence that is of great significance for the comparative study of religions. The possibility of connections between Indian and African beliefs is still a virgin tract for research.

A Philologist Examines Plato

Dr. R. S. Bluck, of the University of London, examines in detail the significance of Plato's exposition of reincarnation in the *Phaedrus.* His article, "The Phaedrus and Reincarnation," in the *American Journal of Philology* for last April, examines Plato's intentions in his description of the "soul's wanderings." From a theosophical point of view, Dr. Bluck is quite correct when he suggests that Plato's "10,000 year cycle" of reincarnation is not meant to refer to the *whole* of the soul's history. Dr. Bluck writes:

> If Plato regarded mankind and the universe as having had no beginning in time, he may have supposed that such souls as have neither been damned (if he really believed in eternal damnation) nor obtained final release have been undergoing cycles of reincarnation from all eternity. If, as others believe, the creation of man by the created gods at *Timaeus* 42D is meant to suggest a beginning in time, he may have supposed that all such souls have been undergoing reincarnation since then—or at any rate since the time when they were severally confined by the created gods within human bodies.

When Plato speaks of the "fall" of the soul, he explains that its taking on an onerous incarnation is due to "bad training" by the soul of some of its instruments. Therefore, the "fall" has none of the connotations associated with the doctrine of original sin in Christianity. As Dr. Bluck puts it, "Plato does not commit himself to a doctrine of an original 'fall.' He may be suggesting, rather, that the human soul may aspire to *promotion* which would enable it to enjoy such happiness as it has never known before." Further, "since the object of trying to attain to philosophic virtue is in fact eternal bliss, it is clear that only when such virtue has been attained can one hope for complete *immunity* from any further fall. How long it takes to achieve that will depend upon individual effort, and will not be fixed at all."

The Ground Work in William James

The last few years have also witnessed a resurgence of appreciation for one of America's greatest philosophers, William James. It is of extreme interest to note that the father of American psychology, who called himself a *physiological* psychologist, concerned himself with several avenues of approach to reincarnation theory. In his essay on human immortality, recently issued in a paperback edition by Dover Publications, Dr. James examines the many objections to a doctrine of the immortality of the soul. First of all, James quite apparently feels that a richness of tradition in immortality theory has been denied us by the numbing effect of Christian dogmas. The Christian immortality has been a special condition, presumably created for man alone, among all living creatures, by God. The natural scientist, in sensing an essential kinship between man and all other forms of life, can hardly take seriously a theory of immortality applying solely to the human species —and which extends only to a single after-death condition.

The Infinite Universe

To close this gap in thought, James presents these considerations:

> The Universe, with every living entity which her resources create, creates at the same time a call for that entity, and an appetite for its continuance,—creates it, if nowhere else, at least within the heart of the entity itself. It is absurd to suppose, simply because our private power of sympathetic vibration with other lives gives out so soon, that in the heart of infinite being itself there can be such a thing as plethora, or glut, or supersaturation. It is not as if there were a bounded room where the minds in possession had to move up or make place and crowd together to accommodate new occupants. Each new mind brings its own edition of the universe of space along with it, its own room to inhabit; and these spaces never crowd each other,—the space of my imagination, for example, in no way interferes with yours. The amount of possible consciousness seems to be governed by no law analogous to that of the so-called conservation of energy in the material world. When one man wakes up, or one is born, another does not have to go to sleep, or die, in order to keep the consciousness of the universe a constant quantity.

In concluding the essay on human immortality, James again makes it plain that while all limited conceptions of immortality must be philosophically suspect, a universal conception of immortality merits the serious attention of philosophers:

Why Not Claim "Perpetuity"

> The heart of being can have no exclusions akin to those which our poor little hearts set up. The inner significance of other lives exceeds all our powers of sympathy and insight. If we feel a significance in our own life which would lead us spontaneously to claim its perpetuity, let us be at least tolerant of like claims made by other lives, however numerous, however unideal they may seem to us to be. Let us at any rate not decide adversely on our own claim, whose grounds we feel directly, because we cannot decide favorably on the alien claims, whose grounds we cannot feel at all. That would be letting blindness lay down the law to sight.

Of great interest to Theosophical students is James' preface to the second edition of the "Essay on Immortality." Here he explains the direction of much of his thinking, and, though he obviously did not intend to commit himself to any particular doctrine, he does illuminate, by philosophical signposts, the way to reincarnation.

The Larger Self

Since philosophers have often been puzzled as to what meaning or value could possibly be contained in unremembered existences in the past, James points out that in one special sense the Self is indeed dual:

> Just as (to use a very coarse figure) the stubs remain in a checkbook whenever a check is used, to register the transaction, so these impressions on the transcendent self might constitute so many vouchers of the finite experiences of which the brain had been the mediator; and ultimately they might form that collection within the larger self of memories of our earthly passage, which is all that, since Locke's day, the continuance of our personal identity beyond the grave has by psychology been recognized to mean.
>
> It is true that all this would seem to have affinities rather with preexistence and with possible re-incarnations than with the Christian notion of immortality. But my concern in the lecture was not to discuss immortality in general. It was confined to showing it to be *not incompatible* with the brain-function theory of our present mundane consciousness. I hold that it is so compatible, and compatible moreover in fully individualized form. The reader would be in accord with everything that the text of my lecture intended to say, were he to assert that every memory and affection of his present life is to be preserved, and that he shall never *in saecula saeculorum* cease to be able to say to himself: "I am the same personal being who in old times upon the earth had those experiences."

MENTAL TELEPATHY TO BE HARNESSED?

We read in the New York *Herald-Tribune,* Nov. 3, 1958, that even parapsychology is not exempt from mechanization: "Westinghouse Electric Corp. scientists are seriously studying the possibility of harnessing mental telepathy and other forms of extrasensory perception (ESP) for long-distance communications systems." This information has been confirmed, the paper says, by Dr. Peter A. Castruccio, director of the company's Astronautics Institute. The *Herald-Tribune* continues:

> Such a communication system, however impossible it may now be to conceive it, would be non-interceptible. Mental telepathy is also instantaneously sent and received, its believers say. In comparison, the fastest thing known to physical scientists is light, which travels at 186,000 miles a second.
>
> Many scientists who are brilliant in their own more conventional fields describe ESP as "intellectually frustrating." They can find no framework in which it makes sense, yet none in which they can discard it completely.
>
> The "thought waves" do not weaken with distance, according to ESP experimenters. This means that no energy—as we know it—is behind the "waves." In classical science, communication without energy is like having a sentence without words.

Dr. Castruccio also stated that because noise often interferes with ESP communication, Westinghouse is now building a machine that will measure the signal-to-noise ratio.

CASES OF MENTAL TELEPATHY REPORTED

This Week section of the Los Angeles *Times* for January 11 notes the Westinghouse project and prints six letters it has chosen from "a flood of letters from people who believed they had had ESP experiences." One letter is of particular interest because the visual phenomenon was "objective," rather than subjective, as in a dream, or sensed as an overpowering "feeling." This ESP forewarning may well have saved a woman's life, the *Times* suggests:

> "My husband was working at a lumber mill twenty miles downstream and left the house at dawn," she related. "I was alone with my little daughter." About 8 a.m., she recalls she was outside hanging up laundry when suddenly a young man appeared.
>
> "I was startled," she continued. "The road that goes past our house was in full view and I hadn't seen him come. He couldn't have come through the woods—it was like a jungle. He was dressed in rough

clothes. He stared at me without speaking. On his face was a terrible look of anguish. I stepped toward him, asking, 'Who are you? What do you want?' And he vanished—like smoke."

Premonition?

The account continues:

Bewildered and uneasy, she went through the day. At sundown she spied a figure coming down the road. It was the stranger again.

"I was afraid," she went on. "I barred the door and locked the windows. He knocked. I leaned out of an upstairs window and asked him what he wanted. He said he was hungry. In the wilderness, you feed everybody.

"I was ashamed of my refusal, but I told him I hadn't any food. I threw him down some money. He picked it up and went off down the road."

Her husband came home very late, looking upset. "I've been worried about you," he said. "There's a murderer loose in the area."

He went on to say that a convicted killer had escaped from jail, killed two men in town and two more people in the kitchen of a farm home where he had begged a meal. His description exactly fitted the mysterious stranger.

"Seen him?" the housewife cried. "I've seen him twice—once early this morning and again this evening." Her husband listened to her story, then shook his head. "You couldn't have seen him this morning," he said. "He was safe in jail until noon!"

This would seem to be a case where the psychic projection carried its own danger signals, and the "subject" was sufficiently receptive to respond to them.

A Lutheran Pastor Speaks Out

A "special" from Atlantic City to the New York *Times,* Feb. 5, 1958, states:

A Lutheran Church leader challenged today a widely held belief that college and university campuses were in the midst of a religious awakening.

The churchman is the Rev. Dr. Donald R. Heiges, of Chicago, director of college and university work for the National Lutheran Council. Dr. Heiges said student interest in religion reached its peak between 1946 and 1951. But the student of today, he observed, is "preoccupied with secular values and insulated against eternal issues."

Dr. Heiges declared that Lutheran campus pastors were generally in agreement that the typical student of today is "self-centered, com-

placent, utilitarian, superficial, socially irresponsible, conformist but tolerant."

THE MINIMAL MAN

What Dr. Heiges observes in campus students—that they have "no questions about existence," and have queries "only on the horizontal plane of lucrative career and comfortable family life"—reminds us of Joseph Wood Krutch's "minimal man." In the concluding paragraphs of *The Measure of Man,* Krutch says:

> Gradually man will be conditioned to accept the fact that he is nothing in himself, and even the epiphenomena associated with consciousness and the delusions regarding choice and value will disappear.
>
> Perhaps they have already begun to do so. Perhaps there is nothing which can alter or even delay the process. But if the so-called epiphenomena are actually something more, if the very ability to imagine that we may be something more than "products" is something new in the universe and something which corresponds to a reality, then we may be having our last chance to make something of it. We should think twice before we consent to dismiss the possibility from our minds. If we do not, we may never be able really to think again.

WHICH WAY ARE WE HEADING?

What an appalling prospect Dr. Krutch here suggests! We may, without a too-lively use of the imagination, concede that such a dimming of the *manasic* light might well be a prelude to the "horror" which H. P. Blavatsky foresaw as a possible end to our cycle. Concluding one of her greatest articles, "Our Cycle and the Next," she says:

> If Theosophy, prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generation, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. . . . But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.

THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

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The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signatures will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with. Write to:

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